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**AFRICAN  
NATIONAL CONGRESS**

**PRESS STATEMENT OF THE  
EXTENDED NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE  
AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS  
18 MAY, 1991**

An extended meeting of the ANC National Executive Committee, which included delegations from the leadership of the ANC Women's League, Youth League, SACP and COSATU, met yesterday. The meeting discussed the deadlines of 30 April and 9 May, as well as the idea of a peace conference and popular actions in support of various demands. The central concern dominating the meeting was the serious threat that the violence is posing to the negotiations process.

It was resolved that peace is absolutely necessary for a democratic transformation of our country. To this end, the meeting strongly supported a peace conference involving all parties and organisations. It needs to be a conference that reaches multi-lateral, binding agreements with obligations on all parties to act in accordance with these agreements. No single individual or party can resolve the conflict that exists in South Africa.

The meeting expressed its support for the present initiative of religious leaders to ensure that a broad-based peace conference is convened. To ensure a workable and serious peace conference, the religious leaders could facilitate the convening of a preparatory committee that comprises all the key actors - employers, labour unions, the spectrum of political parties, the government and religious bodies. Such a preparatory committee would be responsible for organising the peace conference.

It was resolved that the ANC, SACP and COSATU would not attend the meeting, called unilaterally by FW de Klerk, for 24 and 25 May.

A peace conference must be a serious affair and not merely a symbolic event. Agreements with enforcement mechanisms need to be reached on such areas as:

- \* a code of conduct for all political parties;
- \* a code of conduct for the security forces;
- \* elaboration on the powers and functions of any Standing Commission on Violence, which should offer speedy and effective relief to victims of violence; and
- \* a comprehensive approach to reconstruction.

Rather than hastily and unilaterally convening a symbolic conference in an attempt to score tactical points, the government must use its powers to curb the violence and to ensure that its own security forces act impartially. We have still to see any real evidence of the government's bona fides in this regard.

The meeting expressed its solidarity with and saluted the political prisoners on hunger strike, and all others who remain incarcerated for their political activities. The government has dragged its feet for two weeks beyond the deadline for the release of political prisoners. It is a deadline to which the government solemnly agreed in the Pretoria Minute.

We are outraged at the cruelty with which some of the hunger strikers have been treated. Some have been put in mortuaries and told they will be left to freeze to death. Others who have suspended their hunger strikes have been charged by the prison authorities with "attempted suicide", and sentenced to spare diet. We shall hold FW de Klerk entirely responsible for any deaths or debilitating injuries that may occur.

The ANC calls on all South Africans and the international community to observe Wednesday, 22 May, as a **Day of Fasting** in solidarity with our political prisoners. We demand their immediate release.

The ANC extended NEC reaffirmed its commitment to the demands in its Open Letter to FW de Klerk. Until such time as progress is made in regard to these demands, the ANC will not involve itself in constitutional discussions with the government, or in any all party congress to discuss the mechanisms for drawing up a new democratic constitution.

Delegations of the ANC and the South African government have already met to discuss the Open Letter demands. These discussions will continue with a view to securing firm commitments from the government.

To back up these demands, which are all centred on bringing about a rapid end to the violence, a series of mass actions are being planned.

These include:

- \* nationwide consumer boycotts, whose timing and duration will be determined according to regional conditions;

- mass demonstrations on June 15;

- \* a national general stayaway on a date to be determined in the next few days.

The ANC extended NEC strongly condemns and dissociates itself from the series of bombings in central Johannesburg in the past 48 hours. The perpetrators are clearly those opposed to the negotiations process for a democratic South Africa.

Unless the government and other parties implicated in the violence address this threat seriously by moving beyond rhetoric and posturing, unless they begin to take concrete and binding measures to end the violence, all South Africans will be the losers.

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